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Safeguarding Children who are Exposed to Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief

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Cases of child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) continue to be documented. However, there is limited research and understanding of CALFB. Further, there is a lack of clarity of definition. These factors then impact upon effective practice. Recognising this, the National Working Group for CALFB called for research on which to develop evidence-based practice. This paper reports on key findings from a mixed-method online survey which was completed by 1361 participants from a range of practitioner and community groups. The participants identified the importance of policy and multiagency working in this area, but they acknowledged the complexity and challenges associated with developing and implementing good practice. Recommendations from the study include a review of relevant policy to evaluate its application to CALFB, the development of faith literacy training for frontline practitioners and the creation of a space in which statutory, faith and community groups can dialogue. © 2019 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

KEY PRACTITIONER MESSAGES:

- Frontline workers express a lack of understanding and experience of child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB), and all require specific training.
- There is a need for faith literacy training and a space for statutory and faith-based communities to dialogue in order to build trust, formulate policy and share good practice.
- Policy around CALFB needs to be formulated and translated into practice.

KEY WORDS: child abuse; child protection; faith groups; multiagency working; procedures/guidelines

'There is limited research and understanding of child abuse linked to faith or belief'

Background

Historically, but not exclusively, child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) has been linked to discourse around witchcraft, spirit possession, and ritualistic and satanic abuse. The label of 'witch' has been attributed to an individual who is considered to possess 'evil power to harm others' (Stobart, 2006, p. 5), and 'spirit possession' relates to the perception that 'an evil force has entered a child and is controlling him/her to harm others' (Stobart, 2006, p. 5). Accusations of witchcraft or spirit possession in a child have often been linked to negative life events such as illness and

'CALFB has been linked to discourse around witchcraft, spirit possession, and ritualistic and satanic abuse'

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unemployment, with children being held 'responsible' for events because of spirit possession (Stobart, 2006) or being a witch (Foxcroft, 2012). Accusations may be directed at children who may be noticeably 'different'; being disobedient, or disabled or bedwetting (Goddard, 2012; Stobart, 2006). Following an accusation, a child will often be isolated, confined to home and s/he may undergo exorcisms or even be abandoned. As Stobart (2006, pp. 21–22) notes:

> 'Abuse may also include beating, burning, cutting, semi-strangulation, starving, bath sleeping, being kept away from school, being tied up, asking for the child to be removed, threat of abandonment and neglect; with neglect of these children including failure to provide appropriate medical care, lack of supervision, poor hygiene and nutrition, poor clothing and a lack of a safe environment.'

All of these factors increase the child's vulnerability (Foxcroft, 2012).

'CALFB… can include a much broader set of harmful practices'

It should be noted that although traditionally CALFB has been defined in relation to witchcraft and spirit possession, it can include a much broader set of harmful practices. For example, there are recorded cases of medical neglect and excessive physical punishment of children being linked to faith or belief (Bottoms *et al*., 2004; Peters, 2008). Certainly, the requirement for parental consent can sometimes be overridden in cases of a parent wanting to withhold medical treatment due to faith or belief if this is not considered to be in the best interest of the child; though these cases are deeply complex and often demand dialogue and intervention by many different professionals (Brierley *et al*., 2013).

In September 2017, there was a United Nations (UN) expert workshop on witchcraft and human rights calling for violence and abuse of children linked to accusations of witchcraft to be addressed and stopped (Gilmore, remarks by the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sept 21-22, 2017). In the UK, the topic has been raised in public consciousness through high-profile cases such as Victoria Climbié and Kristy Bamu (Bartholomew, 2015; Prospera, 2014), and this increased awareness of CALFB is demonstrated in the following government reports: *Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession* (HM Government, 2007); and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2006), with the 2018 version (HM Government, 2018) containing a link to the *National Action Plan* on CALFB (Department for Education, 2012). Further, a specific category of CALFB was included in the *Characteristics of Children in Need* data for the first time in 2016–17 (Department for Education, 2018). CALFB is also referred to in some faith communities' child safeguarding policies and within some child safeguarding training (see for example, Church of England, 2010). This last point resonates with the increased focus on safeguarding in faith communities and is demonstrated also in the growing number of safeguarding posts therein.

'There is no universally agreed definition of CALFB'

Yet despite this increased awareness both globally and in the UK, currently, there is no universally agreed definition of CALFB and thus the term remains 'open to multiple interpretations' (Simon *et al*., 2012, p. 5). Additionally, there is limited reference to CALFB in academic or practice journals and thus there are few resources to which practitioners and members of faith and community groups might refer for guidance.

Indeed, even recent media presentations of the story of the abuse perpetrated against Victoria Climbié (*The Reunion*, 2017) merged discussion of her story with other cases of child abuse which were

unrelated to faith or belief. As a consequence, the relevance of faith or belief to the perpetration of the abuse and ultimate death of Victoria Climbié was submerged within the general horror of the experience of the child. Further, as the relevance of multiagency working in CALFB was not discussed, potential debate around the importance of different professions working collaboratively was lost.

In another example, a recent case of CALFB led to criminal convictions in 2017, but this story has failed to be reported in the national press. This is illustrative of the continued silence leading to limited public awareness and dialogue. It is interesting to note the current challenges of working with CALFB, considering that this is by no means a recent safeguarding issue. Rather, faith and belief have been linked throughout history to physical, psychological and emotional abuse of children (Capp, 1995). CALFB is not specific to any given culture or faith (Capp, 1995) with examples being recorded 'worldwide among Europeans, Africans, Asians and elsewhere as well as in Christian, Muslim, Hindu and pagan faiths among others' (Department for Education, 2012, p. 3).

'Faith and belief have been linked throughout history to physical, psychological and emotional abuse of children'

The complexity of cases and issues related to CALFB argues for the necessity of a multiagency response. The focus on multiagency working (e.g. Carter *et al*., 2007; HM Government, 2018; Munro, 2011) has emphasised the need for agencies to work together in order to challenge child abuse most effectively. However, as Peckover and Golding (2017) note, multiagency working is complex. Clarity around effective sharing of communication and information in a context of different professional roles and responsibilities is essential (Moran *et al*., 2007; Reder and Duncan, 2004), as is an understanding about how professionals interact and work collaboratively (Hall *et al*., 2010; White and Featherstone, 2005). Specifically, in working with CALFB, there are useful examples of multiagency responses in the Trust for London (2010) work which created the *Safeguarding Children's Rights* initiative. The formation of the *National Working Group* (NWG) (https://vcf-uk.org/national-working-group-child-abuse-linked-faith-belief/) also reflects a multiagency response of statutory, voluntary, community and faith organisations. The NWG developed the *National Action Plan to Tackle Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief* in 2012 (Department for Education, 2012). This policy document focuses upon four areas: the need to engage communities; empowering practitioners; supporting victims and witnesses; and communicating key messages. A series of activities designed to achieve these aims is listed in the plan. Some of these activities specify the need for research with practitioners and communities and faith leaders, and to develop more effective responses to cases of CALFB. Currently, there remains a paucity of work on CALFB which researches the implementation of these four areas in practice. Additionally, there is very limited work that explores the efficacy of multiagency working or frontline practitioners' knowledge or training needs in the area. A focus on these areas could be argued to be essential if victims and witnesses are to be supported more effectively. Understanding the perspectives, knowledge and awareness of frontline practitioners and community groups about CALFB could help to identify knowledge gaps, training needs and practice challenges. Addressing these could then lead to more informed practice and in turn more effective support for witnesses and victims.

'There is very limited work that explores the efficacy of multiagency working or frontline practitioners' knowledge or training needs [in CALFB]'

The lack of empirical evidence on which to base effective practice was noted by the NWG. The group also acknowledged problems with ascertaining prevalence levels of CALFB. The current study reported in this paper is a result of a joint meeting between ourselves and representatives from the NWG. A general remit of contributing to the limited research and to begin to develop an understanding of frontline professionals' and community groups' work around CALFB, including any multiagency working, was identified. The need to record the prevalence of CALFB across communities was also acknowledged; though it was noted that establishing current understandings and knowledge of CALFB among frontline practitioners and community groups needed to be part of the initial focus, as unless individuals understand what constitutes CALFB, and are aware of indicators, any prevalence data will be open to question.

The Study

'1361 participants completed the online survey'

The aims of the study were to: (1) explore frontline practitioner and community group awareness, understanding and experience of CALFB within their current practice; and (2) identify additional support and training requirements for effective practice. The study was delivered via an online survey using SurveyMonkey. A mixed-methods approach (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011) was employed. The survey comprised of 21 questions: 13 closed questions and eight open questions. The survey was live from September 2015 to June 2016. In total, 1361 participants completed the online survey. Respondents had backgrounds in social work (n = 91), teaching (n = 156), counselling (n = 79), police (n = 318), medicine and healthcare (n = 60), faith organisations (n = 771) and community organisations (n = 143), with 219 respondents listing 'other' as their professional background. It should be noted that respondents were able to identify in more than one category. The link to the survey was distributed across the internet via membership organisations of the NWG and social media (Twitter and Facebook). British Psychological Society (BPS, 2009) ethical guidelines were adhered to, and the study was approved by Manchester Metropolitan University Ethics Committee. BPS ethical guidelines require researchers to consider potential harm to participants, anonymity and transparency in research. In order to protect respondents and being cognisant of the sensitive nature of the topic, we sought to preserve participants' anonymity. Therefore, no internet protocol addresses were collected. The survey began with an information sheet and electronic consent. Participants were not asked about individual cases or personal experiences of CALFB. All identifying information was removed prior to analysis. All participants were given the opportunity to withdraw their data and/or permission for anonymised quotes.

A Likert scale of responses was used to indicate quantitative measures of participants' knowledge, experience and confidence in managing incidences of CALFB. SurveyMonkey's online tool was used for descriptive statistical analysis. 'Free text' responses to open questions provided qualitative data on effective practice together with participants' training and support needs. These qualitative data were analysed using SurveyMonkey's online qualitative tool.

Findings

There was a series of closed questions related to understanding and awareness of CALFB. Results of these questions are summarised in Table 1.

There was a series of closed questions related to policy and knowledge of the National Action Plan on CALFB, and whether the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB) had policy and procedures related to CALFB. Finally, there was a question identifying additional support for working in this area. The results are summarised in Table 2.

Responses indicate two key challenges for effective working with CALFB in the open text comments. These were identified as 'policy' and 'multiagency working'. The research findings illustrate that respondents were working with broad understandings of CALFB. Excessive physical punishment, medical neglect and female genital mutilation (FGM) were all listed in the open text responses to questions asking respondents for a definition. For a detailed discussion on the issues of the definition and understanding of CALFB, see Oakley *et al*. (2017).

Policy

Knowledge about the National Action Plan on CALFB was very low. Overall, 34.8 per cent of respondents who answered the question stated that their LSCB had policy and procedure on CALFB. However, only 14 per cent of the overall sample answered the question about the knowledge levels across the whole sample.

'Knowledge about the National Action Plan on CALFB was very low'

Table 1. Understanding and awareness of CALFB by respondent category

Participant	Had heard of the term CALFB	Confident in knowing what the term CALFB means	Confident in identifying indicators	Confident in responding professionally
Teacher	73% (*n* = 92)	62% (*n* = 88)	35% (*n* = 39)	55% (*n* = 65)
Social worker	93% (*n* = 58)	85% (*n* = 50)	59% (*n* = 37)	72% (*n* = 45)
Medical/health care professional	73% (*n* = 24)	49% (*n* = 16)	36% (*n* = 11)	57% (*n* = 17)
Member of a faith organisation	76% (*n* = 444)	71% (*n* = 356)	33% (*n* = 180)	53% (*n* = 290)
Member of a community organisation	79% (*n* = 89)	67% (*n* = 78)	39% (*n* = 44)	55% (*n* = 66)
Police	72% (*n* = 153)	55% (*n* = 119)	35% (*n* = 71)	49% (*n* = 99)
Counsellor	77% (*n* = 48)	66% (*n* = 40)	46% (*n* = 28)	54% (*n* = 34)

CALFB = Child abuse linked to faith or belief.

Table 2. Awareness of policy and procedures of the National Action Plan on CALFB and LSCB related to CALFB, and identification of additional support according to the respondent category

Participant	Familiar with National Action Plan on CALFB	% who stated that their LSCB includes policies and procedures around CALFB	Request for additional support in working with CALFB
Teacher	13% (*n* = 15)	20% (*n* = 23)	78% (*n* = 88)
Social worker	32% (*n* = 20)	25% (*n* = 15)	67% (*n* = 41)
Medical practitioner	14% (*n* = 4)	14% (*n* = 4)	75% (*n* = 21)
Member of a faith organisation	13% (*n* = 67)	17% (*n* = 91)	67% (*n* = 354)
Member of a community organisation	15% (*n* = 16)	24% (*n* = 24)	70% (*n* = 75)
Police	6% (*n* = 12)	11% (*n* = 22)	66% (*n* = 131)
Counsellor	11% (*n* = 6)	19% (*n* = 12)	74% (*n* = 45)

CALFB = Child abuse linked to faith or belief; LSCB = local safeguarding children's board.

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Thirty-four open text comments included policy as part of an effective response to CALFB. The emphasis was on the need for rigorous policy that incorporates faith and abuse:

> 'Policies and procedures that take abuse linked to faith seriously and enable robust investigation alongside the statutory requirement to report concerns to the LADO [local authority designated officer].'

'The need for open discussion of CALFB within policy was emphasised'

Participants also recognised the importance of faith communities developing their own policy for working with CALFB: 'Good safeguarding policies and practices within faith communities'. The need for open discussion of CALFB within policy was emphasised: 'A transparent policy making it clear that it will not be tolerated, open discussion about the possibility of it happening in any given faith community'.

However, in other questions, the issue of policy seemed to divide participants with some suggesting that the signs of abuse in statutory documents such as *Working Together* (HM Government, 2015) were comprehensive and applicable to CALFB: '*Working Together* provides an exhaustive summary of signs of abuse'. Conversely, others seemed less confident that this policy was effective:

> 'The whole area of 'spiritual' abuse in its widest form is not accepted as one of the areas identified in *Working Together*. Many secular professionals are resistant to the concept, making it difficult to address anything other than any visible or identifiable symptoms.'

One participant emphasised the need to lead with policy development and to raise awareness of CALFB at a national and local level if effective response and prevention are to be implemented:

> 'From policy level down to community level there are all manner of challenges that need to be addressed if this issue is to be addressed effectively. At the moment there is very weak government interest in this issue. The national action plan has been a token gesture that hasn't really led to a great deal of positive change. Finally, at community level, police, social workers, teachers and child protection staff have very little understanding or awareness of these issues. Until some, or all, of these changes it is likely that more cases will continue to arise.'

Some participants suggested the need for support in developing effective policy for CALFB: 'Information on approaching the subject and formulating organisational policy'. Others reflected on the necessity to underpin policy development with training and information about CALFB: 'We cannot put a paragraph in our policy about this subject until we have received appropriate training or collective and agreed information'.

'The necessity for multiagency working in preventing and tackling CALFB was clear'

Multiagency Working

Across responses, the necessity for multiagency working in preventing and tackling CALFB was clear: 'Ensure referrals have been made to instigate multiagency strategy meeting to make decisions around the child' and 'Liaison between faith and statutory authorities to secure the welfare of the child'. The

requirement to work with leaders of faith communities in addressing CALFB was reflected in some answers: 'Working with faith leaders who understand child protection is useful because they can give faith-based rationales and support within the faith community'. Some participants suggested that additional support around faith and belief may be needed for multiagency working in this area to be effective: 'Involvement of advisors to understand particular context/background of faith/belief'.

The challenges to multiagency working were noted in many responses. Some comments reflected a perceived mistrust of statutory agencies by faith communities: 'Indication that secular agencies/authorities are distrusted/avoided'. Others reported negative perceptions from frontline practitioners of any individual holding a faith or belief: 'The perception by colleagues that faith is a sign of stupidity or naivety'. Many participants reported a lack of confidence in working with issues associated with faith and belief:

> 'The things I do not yet know about are Faith Constructs, particular religions, or belief structures. Working with Faith leadership when there is an identified problem.'

Further challenges to multiagency working were reported in some responses. Many participants stated limited experiences of working with CALFB: 'I have never personally encountered a case of child abuse linked to faith and belief'. Other responses indicated that the cultural background and personal beliefs of frontline practitioners may affect their own response to CALFB, which in turn could have an impact on multiagency working:

> 'There is also often a difference of opinion between police officers and social workers who may have a cultural background of their own who can see these offences as low level for that reason.'

'The cultural background and personal beliefs of frontline practitioners may affect their own response to CALFB'

One participant suggested that the low levels of referrals for CALFB are an indication of the failure of multiagency working in this area:

> 'The fact that so few cases get directly referred and yet at training sessions it is often raised, suggests that it is happening, but we don't know how to work together as agencies to tackle it.'

Discussion

The present study illustrates key concerns and challenges to effective policy and practice for CALFB. The findings echo Laming's (2003) recommendations to develop multiagency working. However, they also reinforce the complexities and challenges of implementing such practices raised by Peckover and Golding (2017), together with the need for professionals to interact and work collaboratively (Hall *et al*., 2010).

A key issue is the need for a single shared definition of CALFB. Certainly, this presents some challenges with much time being devoted to it in the recent UN expert workshop on witchcraft and human rights held in Geneva on 21–22 September 2017 (Gilmore, 2017). To date in the UK, the National Action Plan on CALFB uses the traditional understanding of CALFB, focusing on witchcraft and spirit possession, though the NWG discussed broadening the

'A key issue is the need for a single shared definition of CALFB'

remit of its work whilst still acknowledging that there remains much work to be done in effectively tackling abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession and witchcraft (Department for Education, 2006). It is clear from participants' responses to the survey reported here that work in this area must acknowledge and engage with the broad definitions of CALFB that are currently used and understood. Further work is also needed to analyse the *children in need* census data (Department for Education, 2018), exploring which behaviours were categorised as CALFB in order to develop a more detailed understanding of the issues impacting children's safeguarding in this area. A data access request (number DR180413.03) has been made to the National Pupil Database to access the *children in need* census data related to CALFB in order to conduct this analysis. Additional useful information might be gathered in future research on a broader range of 'harmful practices', such as FGM and breast ironing, and the interlinking of these with one another. Barnardo's has begun to map some of these data, for example, linking together cases of FGM and CALFB.

The National Action Plan on CALFB was published in 2012, but it is evident in the Findings section of the current study that there is minimal knowledge of this plan and consequently it is having little influence or impact. Further, the current study has clearly shown that recent policy, such as *Working Together* (HM Government, 2015), is useful for some professionals, but limited in its effectiveness for CALFB. It is clear that despite some effective policy being developed, this policy has failed to translate into awareness and practice.

'The first recommendation… is that the National Action Plan on CALFB is reviewed and achievable SMART… goals are established to aid effective implementation'

Thus, the first recommendation of the current study is that the National Action Plan on CALFB is reviewed and achievable SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time related) goals are established to aid effective implementation. In order for this strategy to be effective, there is significant need for financial and government support. The current position is an absence of funding and government backing. This severely limits the possibilities of actioning any SMART goals that are proposed. In September 2018, a new all-party parliamentary group for safeguarding in faith communities was formed. The first inquiry for this group will be the topic of CALFB. It is hoped that this will lead to a greater focus and investment from government (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service, 2018).

The second recommendation is to review *Working Together* (HM Government, 2018) in order to evaluate its focus on safeguarding in faith settings, with particular application to CALFB. It should be noted that the 2018 version of *Working Together* (HM Government, 2018) still only carries a single paragraph addressing issues of safeguarding within a faith context. Between 1999 and 2006, this key statutory guidance increased its recognition of such concerns from a cursory mention of faith settings to almost a page highlighting the importance of the role of those safeguarding in faith contexts. This attention increased in 2010 only to be almost completely omitted by 2013. It is clear, therefore, that policy supporting practitioners working alongside issues of faith is minimal, and thought must be given to redressing this balance in future editions of *Working Together*. It is suggested that this review includes revisiting the guidance offered in *Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession* (HM Government, 2007). The information contained underpins prevention work and advises how to develop effective

support for witnesses and victims, yet very little of this detailed guidance is reflected in the most recent edition of *Working Together* (HM Government, 2018).

It should be noted, however, that some previous initiatives in this area *have* focused on policy, training and dialogue with witnesses and victims. One such example is Project Violet (Metropolitan Police, 2005) out of which the National Action Plan on CALFB was developed. Nevertheless, the research reported in this paper demonstrates that only 12.4 per cent of respondents who responded to this question reported being aware of the National Action Plan on CALFB, which suggests that recommendations alone are insufficient. Rather, financial and governmental backing is required if the recommendations are to be implemented.

The findings of the current study also strongly indicate the importance of faith literacy training for frontline practitioners to facilitate effective practice with CALFB. The census data for CALFB (Department for Education, 2018) identified 1630 cases in England during 2017–18. That is 4.5 cases a day. These figures may appear small when compared to other forms of abuse such as domestic violence and abuse. However, given the complexities and confusion surrounding CALFB, and the fact that this was the first time the category had been included in the census, it is possible that some cases had been missed. Therefore, the numbers should not be dismissed. Further, there were more recorded cases of CALFB than of FGM. Thus, an argument can be made that faith literacy training is needed to build effective support for victims and witnesses. One suggestion could be that faith literacy training should be targeted at those local education authorities (LEAs) returning cases to the census. However, caution must be taken in this approach. As CALFB is still an emerging topic, it is important that training is offered across LEAs as it may be that the census reflects cases identified in authorities where training and awareness are more enhanced.

'The findings… strongly indicate the importance of faith literacy training for frontline practitioners'

Faith literacy is a term which has been around for the last 20 years, though it has only recently become common parlance. Arguably, this is a mark of the now widespread recognition of the importance of religion and belief in public consciousness. It is important to note, however, that the notion of religious literacy has now become very current, but also contested. The lack of confidence in working with spirituality and faith identified in the current study is commonplace. Indeed, Dinham and Francis (2016, p. 4) note that many British people are 'in a muddle' about religion. They argue for the necessity of religious literacy to be developed. To date, it is noticeably absent from teaching curricula, for example, Mathews (2009) notes the absence of spirituality and faith from social worker training. However, the development of this knowledge is essential as Elliott (2017) argues that faith and spirituality are deeply central for many service users, and thus there is a pressing need to address the gap in understanding of these concepts by service providers.

Thus, the third recommendation is to develop faith literacy curricula across frontline professional training and continuing professional development.

The findings of the current study illustrate a void in understanding and effective working on CALFB across frontline professionals and faith and community groups. A distrust of statutory agencies is demonstrated in some responses from faith communities. Similarly, a dismissive attitude towards faith and belief is noted in some professionals' responses. Research undertaken in

'A distrust of statutory agencies is demonstrated in some responses from faith communities'

the field of safeguarding children mirrors these findings suggesting that there has been 'a disconnect between social services and faith communities concerning child abuse prevention efforts' (O'Neill *et al*., 2010, p. 381). Mistrust can arise in different ways, for example, through lack of information and opportunities to develop partnership working (O'Neill *et al*., 2010).

However, models of good practice exist which demonstrate the impact of dialogue between statutory and faith agencies in diminishing distrust and building good relationships. One such model came out of *Operation Nicole* in 2008 (Dinham and Francis, 2016). The aim of this initiative was to develop relationships between the Muslim community and police officers in the wake of 7/7 (the 7 July 2005 London bombings). At first, police officers showed a lack of understanding of the Muslim faith in facilitated meetings (Dinham and Francis, 2016). However, through a process called learning from each other's stories, both parties developed mutual understandings and respect, and relationships which endured after the events (Griffith-Dickson, 2015, cited in Dinham and Francis, 2016). Dinham and Francis (2016) suggest that such dialogue allows individuals to achieve mutual respect through understanding differences. Such conversations are not an attempt to persuade someone to another's viewpoint but to understand the 'otherness' of someone's opinion, and through this to have greater awareness and to build mutual respect.

The fourth recommendation is to create safe spaces for statutory and faith-based communities to dialogue, build trust, formulate policy and share good practice around CALFB. This could be achieved, in part, through CALFB conferences and workshops, with delegates and speakers representing those agencies and communities engaged with safeguarding children.

'Professionals and members of faith communities want to address CALFB, but … lack the skills and knowledge to do so'

In conclusion, the results of this survey have shown that professionals and members of faith communities want to address CALFB, but that, currently, they lack the skills and knowledge to do so. The survey has also shown that there is a desire for multiagency working in this area. There is a need for fundamental improvements in the skills acquisition and training of frontline professionals in CALFB. Policy, training and resources are key to achieving these improvements.

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